

THE BY-LAWS OF THE
HOPEDALE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
COMMUNITY

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ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Congregation shall be Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community.

ARTICLE II

Bond of Union

We are bound together in religious community for the worship of that which is eternal in every place and time, in that we share a common humanity. Our purpose is to sharpen our ethical awareness and broaden our sense of social responsibility. Love is the spirit of this Congregation and service is its expression.

ARTICLE III

Membership

A. Membership

Any person sixteen years or older who is in sympathy with the goals and purposes of this Congregation may become a voting member by signing the official Membership Book. Membership shall entail personal contribution of time, talent, and financial resources in support of this Congregation. The Membership Book shall remain in the custody of the Board and shall be available to the Congregation.

B. Friends of the Congregation

Friends of the Congregation are those who have not signed the Membership Book, but participate in the activities of the Congregation or give evidence of their support.

C. Removal From Membership

If a Member has not contributed time, talent, or financial resources to the Congregation for one year, the Membership Committee shall contact the inactive Member in writing to see whether he or she wishes to continue Membership. If the inactive Member indicates either that he or she wishes to be removed from the roll or fails to respond within sixty days, he or she will be removed from the Membership roll.

ARTICLE IV

Congregational Meetings

The dates of regular non-business meetings of the Congregation shall be determined by the Congregation itself or by any person or persons designated by it.

The annual Congregational Business Meeting shall be held each year between March 1 and April 30 at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board. At this meeting the slate of officers recommended by the Leadership Development/Nominating Committee will be presented for election. Nominations from the floor may be made, with the nominee consent, for the Leadership Development/Nominating Committee to review and recommend. Nominees in question shall be invited to speak on their own behalf. Voting by

the Congregation on the nominations from the floor who are recommended by Leadership Development/Nominating Committee will be conducted by mail ballot sent to members within two weeks. A second Congregational Business Meeting will be held between September 30 and October 30 to approve the budget for the next fiscal year.

Special business meetings may be called at the written request of any five Members or by the President as he or she deems necessary.

The business to be transacted at all meetings shall be set forth in the notice of the meeting, which shall be sent to all Members by mail or electronic mail (email) fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. Thirty (30) percent of the active Membership shall constitute a quorum. When certain decisions are to be made, including the calling or dismissal of a minister, the creation or elimination of a paid staff position, the purchase or sale of property, the signing of a lease of more than 12 months or other long-term financial obligation, or others as determined by the Board, a quorum will be defined as forty (40) percent of the Membership.

Absentee ballots and/or proxies will be accepted for any voting matter except for the calling or dismissal of a minister for which proxy ballots will not be accepted. Absentee ballots shall be in writing, sealed and delivered to a Board member prior to the time when the official vote is taken. Absentee ballots may only be voted on the motion or proposal as published prior to the meeting. Proxies, validated with a Board member prior to the vote, may be voted in accordance with the written instructions of the grantor. Both shall be counted toward a quorum.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Board

A. Board

At each annual meeting there shall be elected a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and the Vice Presidents of Religious Services, Administrative Services, Member Services, and Outreach Services. These Officers shall constitute the Board and perform the duties usually pertaining to these positions. These Officers shall serve for one (1) year, with renewal possible for up to four (4) years in the same position. No Officer shall serve more than four (4) consecutive terms in the same position. Any member of the Congregation is eligible to become a Board member.

The Board shall have general charge of the property of the Congregation and the conduct of all of its business affairs and the control of its administration, including the appointment of such committees as it may deem necessary, and shall be empowered, as authorized by the Congregation in accordance with Article IV, to purchase, hold, and sell real estate. It may fill Board vacancies with persons who shall serve until the next annual meeting so long as said approval occurs at an open session and the applicants are present and invited to speak on their own behalf. Voting on such appointments will be conducted by mail ballot sent to Members within two weeks. The Board shall approve all applications for delegates to denominational meetings and leadership schools.

Board members shall be active Members of the Congregation and shall be seated at the first regularly scheduled meeting in June of the calendar year of their election, except those Officers who are replacing persons appointed to fill vacancies. If a Board member is absent one-third of the meetings in a twelve (12) month period, the Board may declare the office vacant.

Board meetings may be called by the President or any four other Officers. The time and place of all Board meetings shall be published fifteen (15) days in advance of the meeting, except for emergency meetings, which shall be announced at the regular Service preceding the meeting. A quorum of the Board will be defined as four sevenths (4/7) of the Board members. If an office is held by co-officers, either of them will count toward the 4/7 quorum. There is one (1) vote per office. A simple majority will carry a motion.

All Board meetings and Committee meetings shall be open to Members and Friends of the Community except for Executive Sessions. Such visitors are invited to speak but may not vote.

Proxies may be accepted for any agenda item. They shall be in writing, and registered with the President prior to the meeting. Proxies may be voted in accordance with the written instructions of the grantor and shall be counted toward a quorum. Persons voting proxies must be Members.

B. Officers' Duties

The Officers, with assistance from the appointed committees, shall have the following responsibilities:

The President is responsible for calling and presiding at Board and Congregational meetings, coordinating the activities of the other Officers, ensuring that the Congregation's affairs are conducted in accordance with these By-Laws, executing all documents necessary to carry out the purposes of the Congregation, and appointing members of the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee. The President may appoint one of the other Officers to serve in his or her absence. The President has oversight responsibility for the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Committee on Ministry, and the Administrative Assistant.

The Secretary is responsible for maintaining a record of all official actions of the Board and the Congregation. Assisted by the Administrative Assistant, the Secretary posts minutes of meetings within a week of their approval, publishes meeting notices, and maintains a current list of Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs. The Secretary is also responsible for producing official correspondence of the Congregation, keeping an Archival file of historical documents, and maintaining official updated copies of the By-Laws, Manual of Operating Procedures, and other relevant documents.

The Treasurer is responsible for depositing, dispersing and safekeeping the Congregation's funds and liquid assets as authorized by the Board, filing tax and other financial reports as required by law, and maintaining the Congregation's financial records. The Treasurer serves as a voting member of the Finance Committee, and provides advice and counsel to that committee.

The Religious Services Vice President is responsible for supervising the planning of programs for regular Sunday services, special religious events and rites of passage, and for religious education. The Religious Services Vice President has oversight responsibility for the Sunday Service and Lifespan Religious Education Committees. He or she also has oversight responsibility regarding religious services when a paid Religious Education Director and/or Director of Music are/is employed by the Congregation.

The Member Services Vice President is responsible for providing information and support to visitors, Friends, and Members, promoting the benefits of affiliation with the Congregation to interested individuals, and encouraging affiliation with the congregation. The Member Services Vice President also is responsible for promoting communication among individuals and groups within the Congregation to foster a sense of community. The Member Services Vice President has oversight responsibility for the Membership, Caring, and Hospitality Committees.

The Administrative Services Vice President is responsible for financial agreements, employee benefits, and evaluation processes related to paid personnel. He or she provides support for the professional development of the paid staff. The Administrative Services Vice President oversees the financial and physical resources of the Congregation, including evaluating methods for generating funds for the care and supervision of the building and grounds, maintenance and purchase of equipment; and supervision of financial records. He or she shall arrange for the annual audit of the financial records of the Congregation and make a report to the Board. The Administrative Services Vice President has oversight responsibility for the Finance, Fund Raising, and Housing and Property Committees, and serves as a liaison with the Committee on Ministry for issues relevant to his or her duties.

The Outreach Services Vice President is responsible for denominational contacts and social action activities linking the Congregation with surrounding communities and the larger UUA community. The Outreach Services Vice President provides support for and communication about HUUC events and activities and keeps the Congregation informed of local, state, national and international social justice issues, as well as denominational issues and concerns. He or she represents the Congregation to the denomination and serves as an advocate of the UUA within the congregation. The Outreach Services Vice President has oversight responsibility for the Social Action, Denominational Affairs, and Communications Committees.

ARTICLE VI

Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall end August 31.

Budget

In preparing and adopting the annual budget:

- The Administrative Services Vice President with input from the Treasurer, other Vice Presidents, and committee members shall prepare a tentative budget for the coming fiscal year.
- The Board shall review this budget and adopt a proposed budget as a basis for fund raising during spring of each year.
- The Administrative Services Vice President, in consultation with the Fund Raising Committee, shall prepare a fund raising plan for that spring.
- On the basis of the response received during the fund raising the Administrative Services Vice President, in consultation with the Finance Committee, shall prepare a revised tentative budget by August 1.
- The Board shall review the estimated receipts and expenditures and shall adopt a recommended budget for presentation to the Congregation at the October Congregational meeting.
- The Congregation shall adopt the operating budget for the next fiscal year in October of each year.
- This process shall be completed before the beginning of the fiscal year.

ARTICLE VII

Committees

A. Committee Membership

The voluntary participation of Members and Friends of the Congregation in the work of the committees is welcomed and persons are encouraged to inform the Officers of their interest. Officers shall submit a list of recommended committee members to the Board for confirmation at the earliest possible Board meeting after they are seated, and may submit for confirmation new members as the need arises. Committee meetings are open to Members and Friends. Membership on all committees except the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee is open to any Member or Friend of the Congregation. Committee chairs and all members of the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee must be active Members. After recommendations are received from the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee, Standing Committee chairs are approved by the Board. Chairs serve for one (1) year, with renewal possible up to four (4) years. Exceptions may be made if conditions warrant. Committee member appointments expire upon the installation of a new Board. As a general rule, committees should consist of no more than 3-5 members.

B. Committee Operating Procedures

The composition, duties, and operating procedures of all committees, as well as the duties and operating procedures of the Officers and Board, are described in the Manual of Operating Procedures. Procedures may be amended by the Committees and approved by a simple majority of the Board at any scheduled meeting of the Board. The Manual of Operating Procedures shall be maintained by the Secretary.

ARTICLE VIII

Professional Leadership

A. Minister

The duties of the Minister shall include providing overall religious leadership and guidance, conducting worship services, officiating at weddings, funerals, memorial services, and rites of passage, and

providing calling, counseling, and other spiritual services to members. These duties shall be conducted within the spirit of the Covenant of Shared Ministry. The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit and serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Board and such committees as the Board shall designate. The Minister is a voting member of the Sunday Service Committee.

B. Qualifications of the Minister

Any candidate for the position of Minister must hold fellowship in the Unitarian Universalist Association or be an applicant for such accreditation.

C. Calling a Minister

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Minister, a Search Committee shall be established by the Board as a special committee for the purpose of identifying, screening, and bringing candidates for consideration. The Search Committee shall consist of two Board members and three other active Members. The Search Committee shall recommend a candidate after consideration of at least two candidates. Election of a new Minister shall be by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a special Congregational Meeting. A quorum at that meeting shall be forty (40) percent of Members, with absentee ballots counting toward the quorum. No proxy votes will be accepted.

D. Resignation, Dismissal, or Termination of Call

If the Minister wishes to resign or retire, he or she shall give at least ninety (90) days notice in writing to the Board. The Board will inform the Congregation of this action in writing. If dismissal of a Minister is contemplated, the Board shall call a special Congregational Meeting. Dismissal may be initiated by the Board or by a written request signed by at least twenty (20) percent of the active Members of the Congregation. Notice of this meeting shall be only by letter sent to Members at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. A quorum at that meeting shall be forty (40) percent of Members, with absentee ballots counting toward the quorum. No proxy votes will be accepted. In the event that dismissal is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, the Minister's salary shall be continued for two months after the date of dismissal.

E. Other Paid Staff

The Board will determine all terms of employment after consultation with relevant committees. The President will be the supervisor of the Administrative Assistant and the Administrative Services Vice President will be the supervisor responsible for other paid staff members.

ARTICLE X

Dissolution

Should this Congregation cease to function and the Membership vote to disband, any assets of the Congregation will be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association for its general purposes, this transfer to be made in full compliance with whatever laws are applicable.

ARTICLE XI

Amendments

These By-Laws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at any meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those Members present and voting. Any proposed change shall be published at least one (1) month prior to the meeting and this publishing shall serve as the first reading of the proposed By-Law changes. The second reading shall occur at the meeting before a vote is taken on changes.